

# Assessing Substance Abuse Among Secondary School Students in Kendu Zone, Homabay County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

Substance abuse has reached an alarming level globally especially among young people. Statistics available in Kenya indicate that there is an upward trend in substance abuse among young people including students attending secondary schools. Substance abuse has led to increased crime rates in schools, high incidences of school drop-out and increase in poor health indicators among students. The main aim of this study was to assess use and patterns of substance abuse among secondary school students in Kendu zone. It was a school based descriptive cross-sectional study involving a total number of 257 students. The study employed cluster random sampling technique where three schools were selected through simple random technique and the level of students in terms of which form a student was used as clusters for this study. Simple random was then used to select students to participate from each cluster. Data collection was done through use of self-administered, semi structured questionnaire. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 17.0 and data presented in form of pie charts, bar graphs, and frequency tables. From the findings of the study it was found that male students engaged in substance abuse more than their female counterparts. The study also found out that alcohol was the most abused substance at 42.3% followed by cigarette at 22.4%, miraa 16%, bhang and cocaine at 12.1% and 2% respectively with majority of the students reporting that they engaged in substance abuse mainly on weekends, during academic trips and during holidays. Substance abuse especially among young people is a multi-factorial problem that requires collaborative approach to curb it. School administrators, parents and community at large should work together to address this menace. This collaborative approach may provide an opportunity to develop effective prevention strategies on substance abuse especially among secondary school students.

## 1. Introduction

Drugs has been used since time in memorial, the ancestors explored every plant, fruits and roots so that they could get whatever they wanted. They experimented every root , every leaf and every back for their medicinal use(Kombo, 2005)

Substance abuse is associated with various social and health problems, this has been qualified in the recent years. According to UNODC, substance abuse is the most leading risk factor for deaths and disabilities globally. UNODC estimates that about 5.2% of the world population has used illicit drugs(UNODC, 2014)

In the past two decades, the use of illegal drugs and misuse of therapeutic drugs have been on an increase and has penetrated every part of the globe, approximately 7 billion people worldwide abuses substances and 76million of them suffer from their effects, the youth here are the most affected(WORLDBANK, 2008)

In USA, high school students are hooked on alcohol and marijuana more than other drugs. A study conducted in USA and South Africa showed that high school students differed in the type of drug consumed between the two countries. South African students were found to use illicit hard drugs compared to US students(Reddy et al., 2007).

Studies conducted in various parts of the world on substance abuse among young people reveals that there is an increasing trend in indulgence of drugs among this group. A research done in Nigeria on socio-demographic factors associated with psychoactive substance abuse among motorcycle operators found out that those who engaged more in drugs were those of younger age group(Gudaji and Habib, 2016)

Use of psychoactive substances and other drugs in secondary schools appears to be wide spread and varying across African countries. In Ghana for instance, senior students were found to abuse various types of substance though at a lower rate than other part of the African continent and West Africa at large(Nkyi, 2014).

Kenya is also coming to terms with the rampant use of drugs and other substances of abuse in secondary schools. A study conducted in Kenya found out that commonly abused drugs in schools were alcohol ,cigarettes ,bhang and miraa.(Kimani, 2012, Simatwa et al., 2014).These findings were confirmation of an earlier finding by Otieno and Ofulla (2009) which showed that there was rampant use of substance in secondary schools with 57.9% having had consumed drugs(Otieno and Ofulla, 2009)

Like many other developing countries, Kenya is faced with the social problem of high level of drug abuse. To make matters worse, the percentage of drug abusers in the population increases yearly despite the efforts to eradicate the problem(NACADA, 2012).

Drug abuse has affected the youthful population both secondary school students and non students reducing their effectiveness as well as wasting their lives at the age which they are most needed in the society Despite the worldwide concern and education about the dangers of drug abuse, most of the secondary school

students continue to engage in this dangerous practice(Ngesu et al., 2008)

In western region of Kenya ,substance abuse in secondary school is wide spread with alcohol and tobacco being the most abused drugs as indicated in other studies(Simatwa et al., 2014).Factors that have been associated with substance abuse among Secondary school students are peer pressure ,to relax, experimentation, to relieve stress, to cope with problems among other factors(Atwoli et al., 2011)

The main purpose of this study was to help policy makers, educational administrators and other relevant agencies to design specific and goal oriented intervention programs and strategies aimed at addressing this problem of substance abuse in secondary schools thus promoting health and social wellbeing of students.

## 2. Methods and materials

### 2.1 Research design

This was a school based, descriptive cross-sectional study conducted in three secondary schools in Kendu zone, Homa bay county, Kenya

### 2.2 Study population

The study population included secondary school students, both males and females in the three selected secondary schools Kendu zone.

### 2.3 Sampling technique and procedure

The study used cluster random sampling technique where three stages approach was applied. In the first stage three schools were selected through simple random. The next stage involved clustering students in the selected schools based on the level of study they were in. The final stage involved selecting students who were to participate from the formed clusters. In each school proportion to size ratio was used to determine the number of respondent in each school and from each cluster as shown in the tables below.

**Table 1: Table showing distribution of students across various form levels in selected schools**

	Kendu Muslim	Gendia high school	St Francis Girls high school
Total	356	300	200
Form one	96	98	56
Form two	95	72	53
Form three	89	70	46
Form four	76	60	45

**Table 2: Table showing distribution participants across various form levels in selected schools**

	Kendu Muslim	Gendia high school	St Francis Girls secondary school
Total	104	87	58
Form one	28	28	16
Form two	28	21	15
Form three	26	20	14
Form four	22	17	13

### 2.4. Data collection tool and method

Self-administered, semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect the data. Data collection tool was pre-tested in one of the secondary school Gorge ogola secondary school that was not selected for the data collection. This helped to ensure clarity, validity and reliability of the tool.

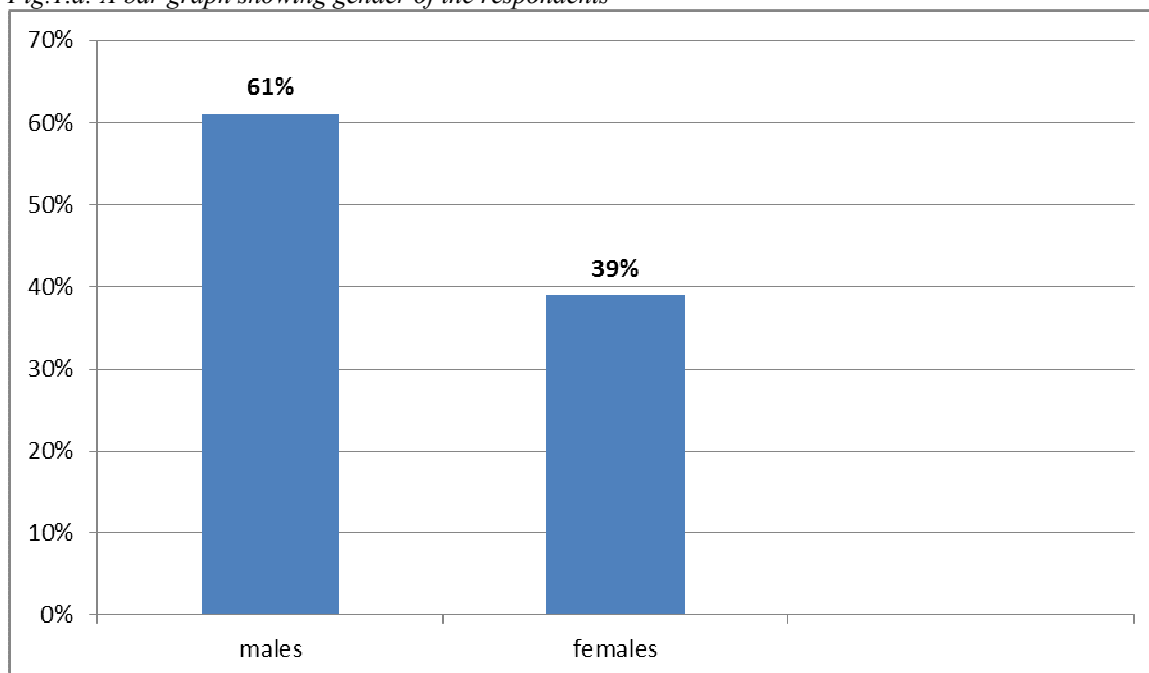
During the time of data collection, the purpose of the research was explained to the participants and consent was obtained from the respondent.

### 2.5. Data management, entry and analysis

Data obtained from the respondents was checked for completeness and consistency. Then it was corded, cleaned and entered into the computer immediately to avoid distortion. Data analysis was done using SPSS version 17.0

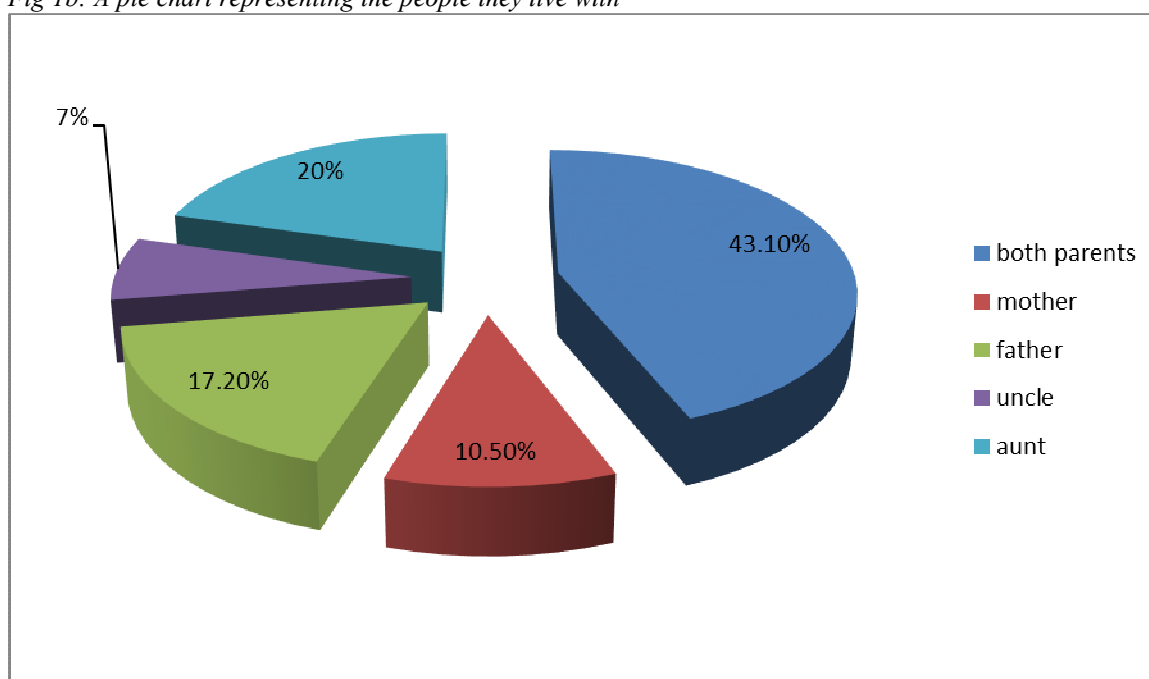
### 3. Results and findings

*Fig.1.a: A bar graph showing gender of the respondents*



The bar chart above shows that the respondents comprised of 157 males (61.1%) and 100 females (39%). Males formed the majority of the respondents as showed in the bar chart.

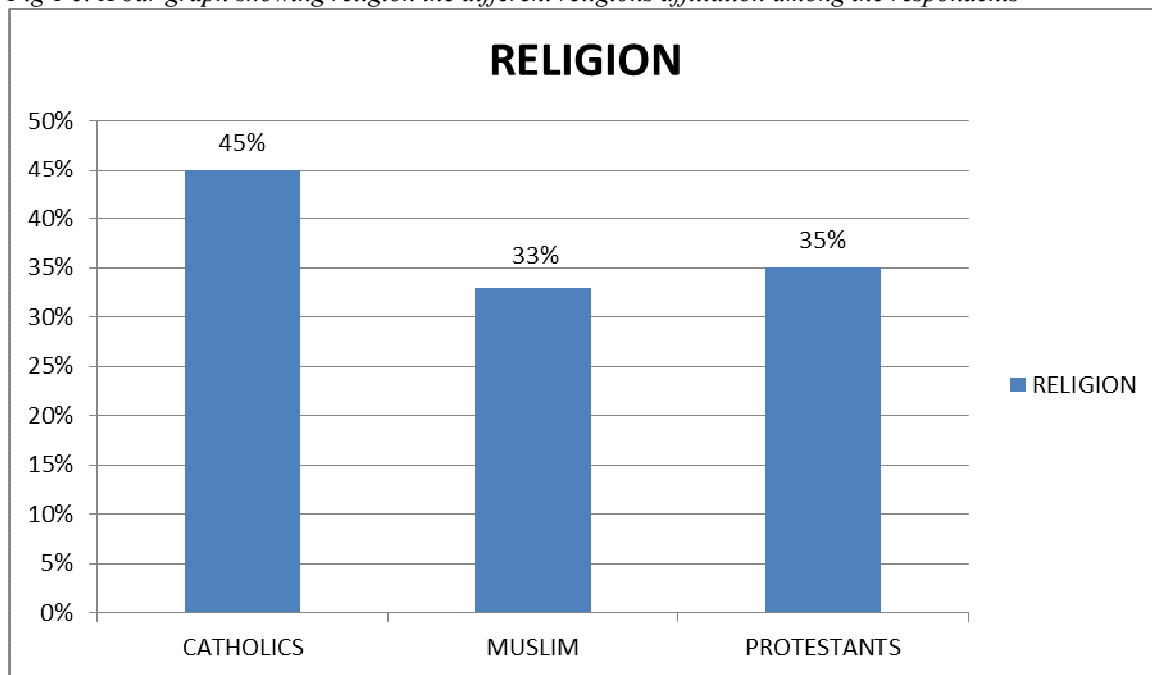
*Fig 1b: A pie chart representing the people they live with*



Majority of the respondents reported that they lived with their parents and others revealed that they lived with other members of the family. Those living with their parents were at a percentage of 43.1%, those living with either the father or the mother were at a percentage of 17.2% and 20% respectively, those living with uncles and aunts were at a percentage of 7.4% and 10.1% respectively.

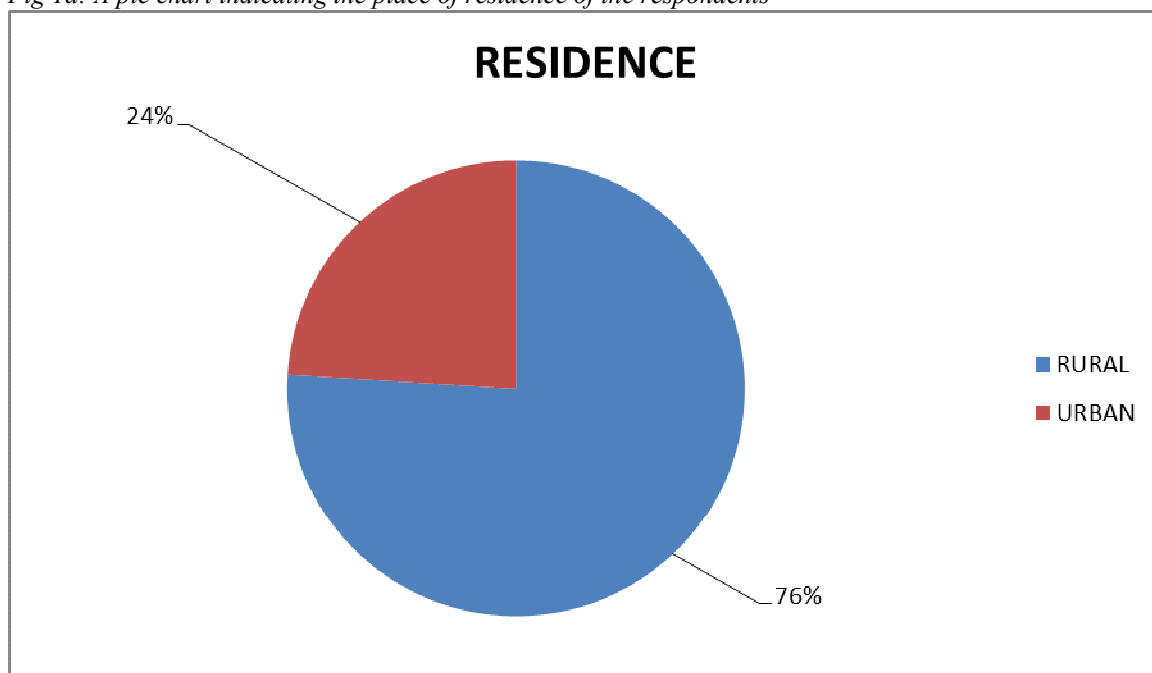
The study also found out that those living with both parents were likely to abuse drugs more than those living with other members at 43.1%.

Fig 1 c: A bar graph showing religion the different religions affiliation among the respondents



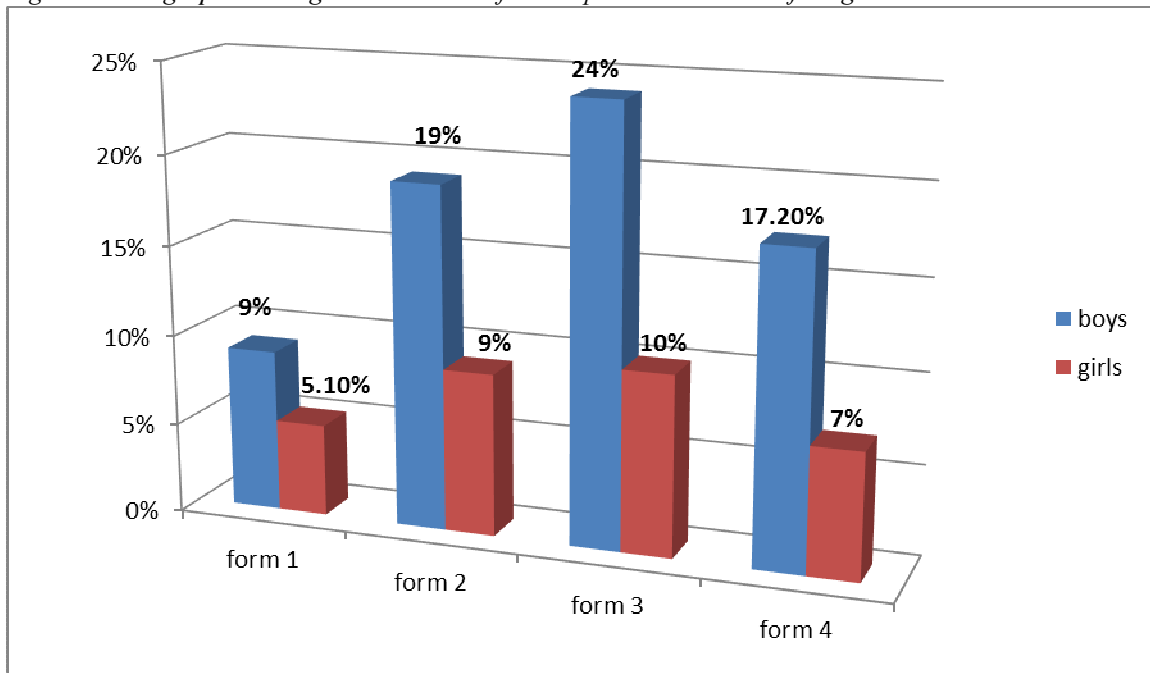
The study found out that majority of the respondents were of catholic faith (45%) followed by protestants (35%) and Muslim (33%). Those respondents. The study also revealed that Catholic faithful are reported of abusing the substances more than other denominations simply because their faith allows the use of the substances at a controlled level.

Fig 1d: A pie chart indicating the place of residence of the respondents



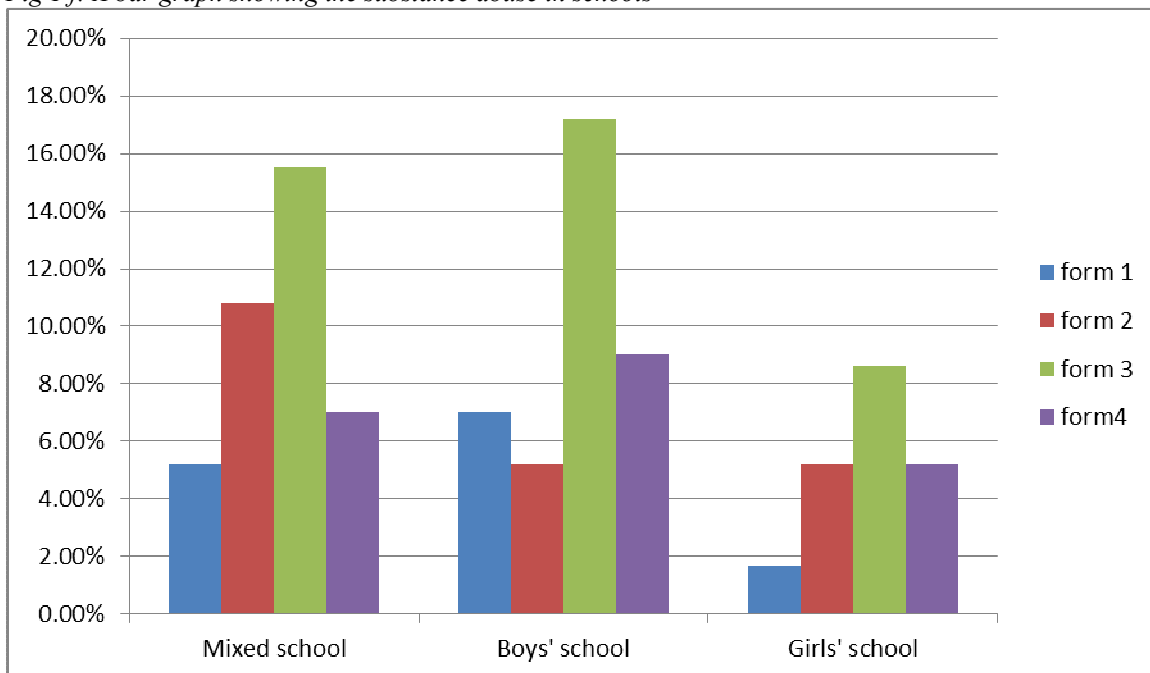
Most of the respondents come from the rural (76%), while a small number lived in urban set up (24%).

Fig 1 e: A bar graph showing the class level of the respondents and use of drugs



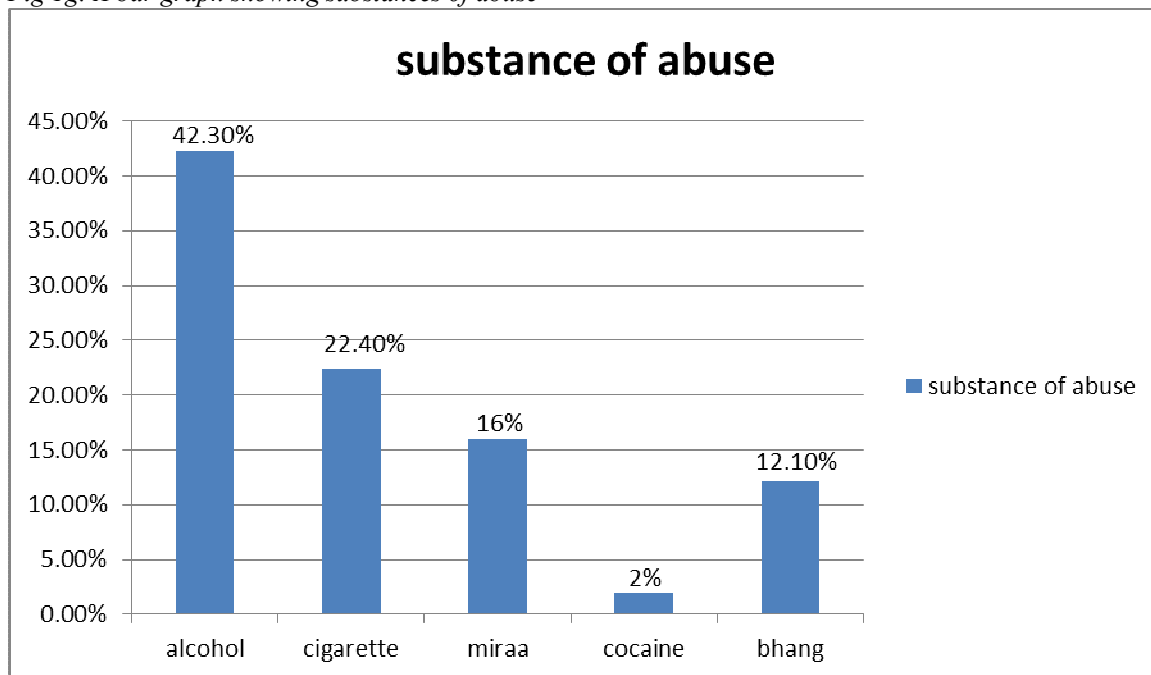
The study showed that students in form three were more likely to abuse the substances compared to other classes at a percentage of 24% for the males and 10% for females. Form showed to be at least likelihood drug abuse at 9% and 5.1% for males and females respectively. This can be attributed to the fact that form threes have been in the school for a longer period of time than form one and two's and have made friendship with people from the neighborhood thus able to get the drugs more easily from these neighbors.

Fig 1 f: A bar graph showing the substance abuse in schools



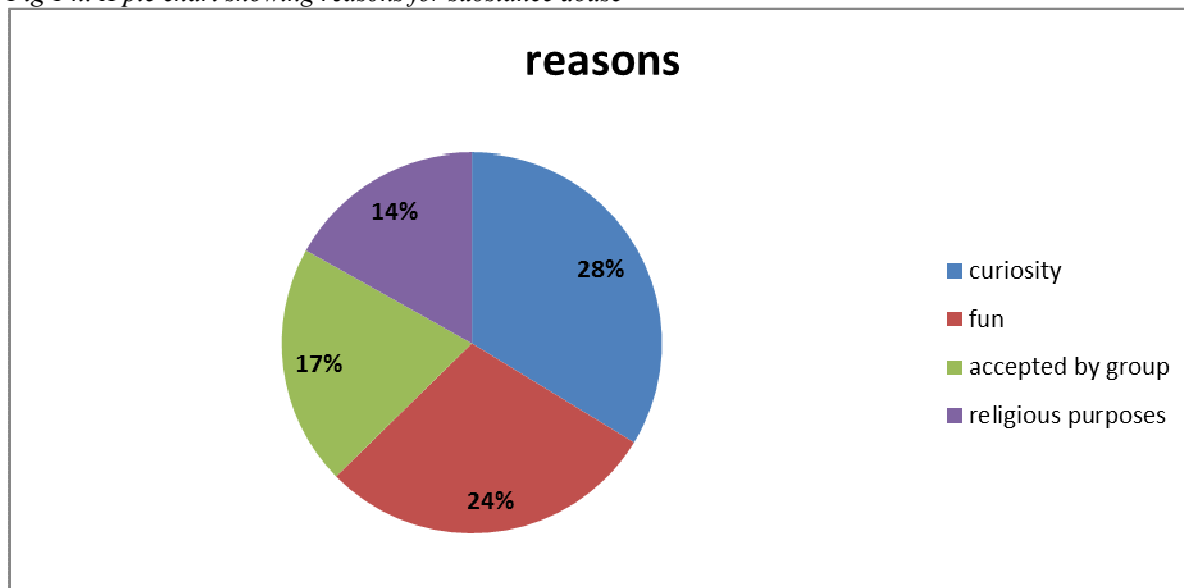
According to our findings mixed schools are the most in substance abuse at a percentage of 41.4%, the boy schools being second at 38% and the least is the girl's schools at a percentage of 20%.Form three's are the leading in substance abuse among the three schools while the form ones are the least in all the schools.

Fig 1g: A bar graph showing substances of abuse



Basing on the findings, among those who were abusing drugs, alcohol was the most consumed substance at 42.3% followed by cigarette at 22.4%, miraa 16%, bhang and cocaine at 12.1% and 2% respectively.

Fig 1 h: A pie chart showing reasons for substance abuse



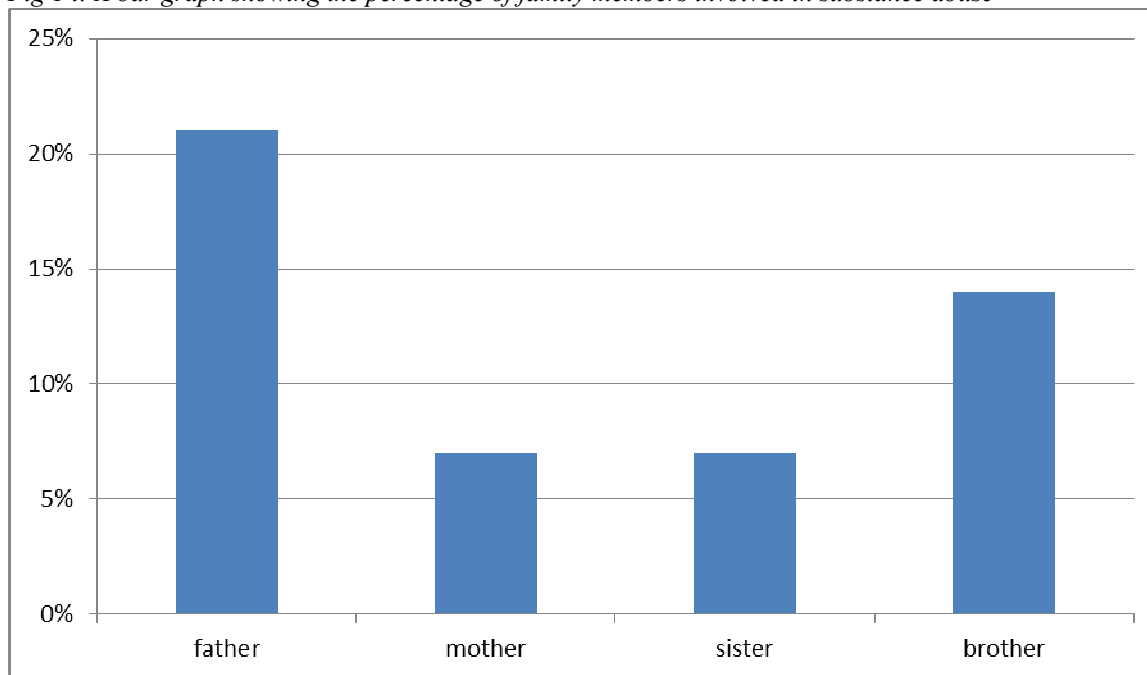
The pie chart above shows that respondents had various reasons for the abuse of substances .Curiosity (28%) formed the major reason why students use drugs, 24% for fun, 17.2% used it to be accepted by the group where as 14% used it for religious purposes.

Table 3: A table showing source of substance abuse to students

Sources	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Shops around the schools	30	52%
Friends	18	31%
Support staff	10	17%

Majority of the respondents say that the main source of substances of abuse is from shops around the schools. 18 respondents (31%) say that the other sources are from friends and 10 respondents (17%) say that they get from support staffs.

Fig 1 i: A bar graph showing the percentage of family members involved in substance abuse



It was found out that those whose fathers are involved in substance abuse are likely to become substance abusers (21%), followed by those whose brothers are using drugs at 14% then the least substance abusers were found out to be those whose mothers and sisters are involved in substance abuse.

Table 4: A table showing source of information

Source of information	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Parents	20	34.5%
Teachers	18	32%
Friends	5	9%
Health institution	15	26%

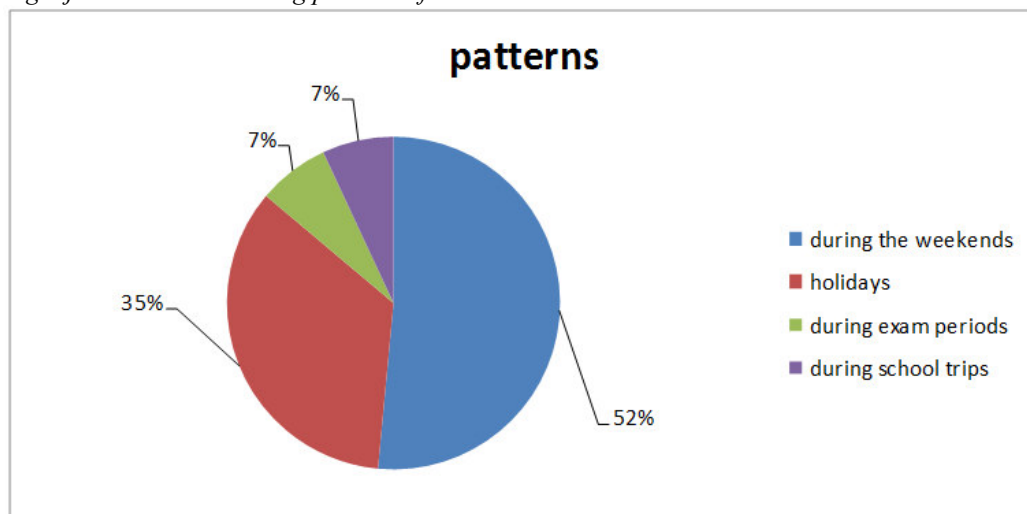
Basing on the research findings, all those using substance of abuse said to be having information on their effects. 20 of them (34.5%) say that they got the information from their parents, 18 of them (30%) say that they got information from their teachers, 15 (26%) that they got the information from the health institutions, while 9% say that they got the information from friends.

Table 5: A table showing the period they started using the substances

Period	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Secondary	55	95%
Post primary	3	5%

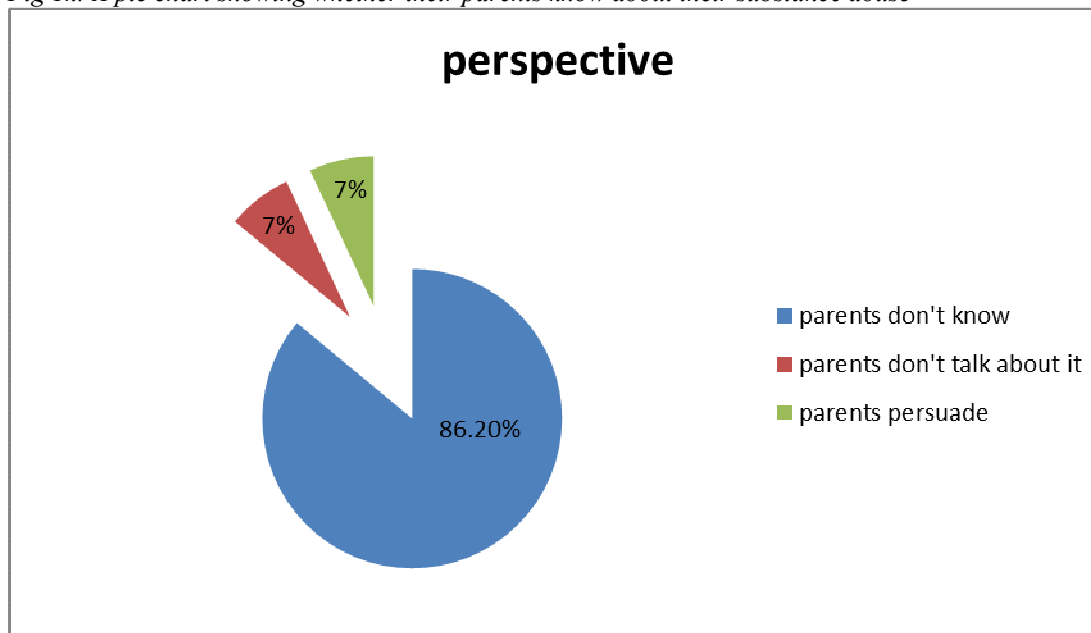
Majority of those using the substances of abuse started taking them while in the secondary school (95%) and those who started using the substances after secondary school comprised of 5%.

Fig 1 j: A Pie chart showing patterns of substance abuse



From the findings, majority of the students were found to use drugs mostly during weekends (52%), other times when students were to be during school holidays; school trips and during examination period.

Fig 1k: A pie chart showing whether their parents know about their substance abuse



Majority of the respondents 86% reported that their parents don't know that they are using the substance of abuse, 7% reported that their parents don't talk about substance abuse and their effects where as 7% reported that their parents have always persuaded them to stop using substances of abuse.

#### 4. Discussion

From the findings of the study, male students were more affected with substance abuse at percentage of 69% and females at 31%. Majority of the respondents reported that substances of abuse were mostly accessed from the shops around the school and from the schools' support staff. These findings illustrate the importance of school administrators to work closely with community members as well as putting mechanisms to discourage school workers from availing drugs to students.

These substances were reported to be consumed during the weekends, that is according to those consuming the substances, it was least consumed during the exam periods. This can be explained by the fact that students are left un-supervised by their teachers during weekends and this could be providing them with easier time to be able to access these drugs.

The study also found out that students from urban settings were likely to abuse the substances than those from the rural areas. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that urban set up has greater influence to teenagers and adolescence behavior due to exposure to urban life style.



## Recommendations

Findings of this study indicated that secondary school students in Kendu Zone abuse substances during the holidays, weekends and school trips with main sources being; from the neighboring schools, sub-ordinate staff and the shops around. Therefore, the following recommendations are highly emphasized in order to curb this problem of substance abuse among secondary students in Kendu Zone.

- School administrators should develop a well integrated student monitoring systems during weekends, school trips and during their free times. Teachers should continue to observe strict rules on students on these occasions as this will help reduce its use.
- School administration should introduce and strengthen counseling and guidance services to students requiring social support.
- Ministry of Education should be encouraged to introduce life skills training in the syllabus to equip students on how to resist indulgence into substance abuse.
- Local administration and community leaders should take immediate action on people involved in drug trafficking and those breaking the rules governing the substance use in the country this will reduce the sources of the substances to the secondary school students as they are young and there are rules governing selling of the substances to the under aged persons

## Conclusions

From the study, it was found that even though every student is aware of the substances and their effects on human health, use of drugs among the secondary school students is still a worrying practice.

To address this problem of substance abuse in schools, parents, school administrators and community at large should work in a collaborative manner to come up with effective strategies in fighting this menace.

## Acknowledgements

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## Ethical considerations

Permission to conduct this study was granted by Kendu Adventist School of medical Sciences Research Review department. Permission was also sought from Rachuonyo North sub-county education officer and from the school administrators before proceeding with data collection. Consent was sought from all the participants with those below the legal age allowed to fill in an assent form.

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